

ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

In the mid-1800's, a Lutheran missionary was sent out to work in a county where he would try to establish a congregation in each township. This plan played a part in forming St. Peter's congregation in Mishicot.

On May 20, 1861 a group of Christians formed St. Peter's Church. The first service was conducted in the public school on Cemetery Hill by Pastor Goldammer, from Manitowoc.

The men of this community who were the organizers of this church were: John Bahls, Claus Schwein, Friedrich Schriever, A.Jens, John Sievert, Freidrich George, Louis Barthels, Friedrich Drews, and Carl Wilsmann.

From 1863 to 1872 the congregation was served by three pastors from Two Rivers: Pastor Butels, Pastor Quehl, and Pastor Zuberbier. In 1871 the officers of the church were elected for a three-year term: they were Carl Wilsmann, Pres.; Friedrech Drews, Sec.; and Dietrich Knickrehm (office not identified.) On April 7th, 1871 the congregation obtained the deed to the property which is now occupied by the parsonage and lawn, from Mrs. Elizabeth Smith, widow of Daniel Smith who was the owner of the lumbering concern in Mishicot, for \$35.00.

Pastor Jaeger served St. Peter's from 1874 to 1881. In 1875 a frame church was built which served this congregation until 1927.

In 1881 the church debt was not clear; and to meet this and other expenses the voters of the congregation set a figure of \$3.00 as membership dues. Even in those years there were people who considered the church as some place only for marrying and burying; but a special meeting was called to declare that only church members would be buried by the pastor from the church.

From 1881 to 1902 this congregation was served by Pastors Prohl, Koehler, Ziegler, and Doehler.

In 1902 Pastor Gustav Vater came to Mishicot, and served until 1908. In 1906 a meeting was held and the voters sought to give their pastor a little additional support by requesting each member to provide a bag of oats for his horse or give \$1.00 in cash.

From 1908 to 1911 Pastor Dornfeld served St. Peter's and also directed a men's choir.

In 1911 Pastor Edward Zell came to Mishicot. He served St. Peter's for 47 years. In February 1913 Pastor Zell received a call to leave Mishicot, but the congregation voted he should remain, and they raised his salary \$50.00 to a total of \$450.00 per year.

A Lutheran school was begun in the early years. At a meeting in June 1914 the school term was changed from six-months to eight-month sessions. The school curriculum included mainly religious instructions for the seventh and eighth grades. The school building continued to be used until it was sold for \$90.00 in 1925, and moved to Main Street to become Shedivy's harness shop.

In 1917 the pastor's salary was raised \$100.00 a year because many members were not abiding by the request for an extra dollar or bag of oats to help with the pastors needs. Organ players received \$.50 per service.

Up until this time the services were held in German, but beginning in 1920 one service per month was in English. Services remained in this format until the 1930's, when the change was made to all services in English except for one in German each month. Services were changed to all English in the 1940's.

In May 1925 the voters made the decision to build a new church. Members of the building committee were George Barthels, Edward Eckhart, George Jindra Jr., Richard Schroeder, Paul Sehloff, Charles Stechmesser, and Henry Thielbar. The land on which the present church stands was donated by Mrs. Eli Peltier, a member of the church.

The granite stone used to build the church was quarried at Redgranite, Wisconsin, shipped by rail to Francis Creek; and then the church members hauled the rocks by horse and wagon to Mishicot.

The architect for the new church was the Rev. Karl Koehler, and the method of construction was the same one used by the late George Whiting Flagg, who designed the Smithsonian Institution building in Washington, D.C. The stone work was done by a Mishicot man, Edward Wegner. The cost of the building was just a little below \$30,000.

Miss Alice Zell started a mixed choir at the church in 1932, and is the director at the time of this writing.

After the death of Pastor Zell in 1958, Pastor Worgull was installed as the pastor of St. Peter's. He served the congregation until 1965. In 1966 Pastor Herbert Kesting came to St. Peter's from Gibbon, Minnesota.

In 1972 the school annex was added to the church complex under the direction of Pastor Kesting.

Pastor Kesting retired in 1985, and Pastor David Waage answered God's call and came to minister the people of St. Peter's.

(Taken from a *Mishicot Meaningful Memories* an article by students Jodi Mueller, Mari Lynn Evers, Daniel Loeh, and Emily Lande; and from a historical summery by Oscar Barthels.)